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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 5603

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PL, US

SUBJECT: RADIO FREE EUROPE BROADCASTS TO POLAND

REF SCANLAN-ANDREWS I-O LETTER OF SEPTEMBER 5, 1974

1. THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL COOPERATION OF THE MFA WOJCIECH CHABASINSKI INVITED PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR TO A LUNCHEON AT WILANOW ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12. ALSO PRESENT WAS JADWIGA PASTECKA, RECENTLY PROMOTED TO COUNSELOR TO THE MINISTER, MFA. FOLLOWING AN UNUSUALLY JOVIAL MONOLOG ON OUR BILATERAL CULTURAL/INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM BY CHABASINSKI, HE INVITED THE PAO FOR A WALK IN THE WILANOW PARK. DURING THE WALK, HE AND PASTECKA TOOK TURNS BERATING RADIO FREE EUROPE FOR RECENT BROADCASTS TO POLAND.

2. CHABASINSKI SAID HE WISHED TO EXPRESS THE MFA'S BEWILDERMENT REGARDING THE TONE OF THE BROADCASTS WHICH HE CLAIMS, SINCE JULY, HAVE BEEN "BELLIGERENT IN TONE." WHEN PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS, CHABASINSKI SAID THE MFA DID NOT WISH TO RAISE THE MATTER TO THE LEVEL OF AN OFFICIAL DEMARCHE. HE ARGUED THAT A REVIEW OF RFE SCRIPTS FOR THE PERIOD SINCE JULY "WOULD REVEAL THAT THE ONLY THING RFE IS NOT DOING IS ACTUALLY SHOOTING AT US." THE RECENT BROADCASTS, HE MAINTAINED, WERE "DELIBERATELY ABUSIVE, PERSONALLY INSULTING TO THE POLISH LEADERSHIP FROM

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THE TOP DOWN, FULL OF CALUMNY AND SLANDER, AND CONTRARY TO THE

USG OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF DESIRING TO IMPROVE POLISH-AMERICAN BILATERAL RELATIONS." THESE "VITUPERATIVE" BROADCASTS, HE CONTINUED, WERE PARTICULARLY EMBARRASSING TO THE MFA AT THIS TIME. THE MFA WAS UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE OBJECTIVES OF USG POLICY, WHICH, ON THE ONE HAND, EXTENDS WARM GREETINGS AND INVITATION TO THE POLISH LEADERSHIP AND, ON THE OTHER, DENOUNCES THESE SAME PERSONS OVER RFE AS "MURDERERS AND CRIMINALS." HE COMPARED THIS ALLEGED TREATMENT OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP WITH THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S DELIBERATE POLICY OF AVOIDANCE OF MEDIA COMMENTARY "ON RECENT EVENTS IN WASHINGTON." HE IMPLIED THAT POLISH MEDIA COULD DEVELOP VERY NEGATIVE STORIES ON "CERTAIN U.S. LEADERS", BUT DID NOT AND WOULD NOT DO SO. ADDITIONALLY, THE MFA FOUND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO RATIONALIZE THE CURRENT RFE TONE IN VIEW OF THE STATION'S NOW BEING "OPENLY AND DIRECTLY FUNDED BY THE USG." AS LONG AS THE FICTION OF PRIVATE FUNDING EXISTED, HE STATED, THE MFA FOUND IT EASIER TO FEND OFF "INTERNAL POLISH CONCERNS OVER THE BROADCASTS." HOWEVER, WITH OUTRIGHT USG FUNDING, THE MFA AND THE POLISH GOVERNMENT MUST NOW REGARD THE RFE AS "EXPRESSING THE VIEWPOINTS OF USG OFFICIALS." THE MFA CAN ONLY REGARD THE RECENT TONE OF RFE TO BE "IN VIOLATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOOD RELATIONS EXPRESSED BY THE USG, INASMUCH AS RFE IS OFFICIALLY FINANCED AND OWNED BY THE USG."

3. WHEN CHABASINSKI AND PASTECKA WERE PRESSED BY THE PAO TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES WHERE RFE BROADCASTS WERE ALLEGED TO HAVE SLANDERED THE POLISH LEADERSHIP, CHABASINSKI DEMURRED, CLAIMING AGAIN THAT THE MFA WISHED TO AVOID THE PRESENTATION OF SCRIPTS, "WHICH ALREADY ARE IN THE POSSESSION OF THE USG-OWNED RADIO FACILITY, "AND WHICH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE CAN OBTAIN BY WALKING DOWN THE HALL." HE SAID THAT THE MFA INSTEAD WOULD PREFER THAT THE USG ITSELF "AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL" REVIEW THE SCRIPTS TO DETERMINE IF THEIR CONTENT WAS "CONDUCTIVE TO THE FURTHERANCE OF BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS" BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THE MFA WAS READY, HOWEVER, TO CITE SPECIFIC BROADCASTS IF THIS WERE REQUIRED.

4. PASTECKA, WHO NORMALLY HAS BEEN THE MFA CHANNEL FOR COMPLAINTS ON RFE, SAID THE MFA FOR SEVERAL MONTHS HAD NOT RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE STATION BECAUSE "THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANGE IN TONE." SHE CLAIMED, HOWEVER, THAT RFE HAD ALTERED ITS TONE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND THAT, SINCE JULY, "RFE HAD LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN OF VILIFICATION OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP," AS WELL AS OTHER PROMINENT POLES, INCLUDING PROFESSOR JAN SZCZEPANSKI, THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES WHO RECENTLY WAS IN THE UNITED STATES UNDER USG SPONSORSHIP AS ONE OF THE FIRST LINCOLN

SCHOLARS. "WHY," SHE ASKED, "DO YOU INVITE PEOPLE OFFICIALLY AND THEN SLANDER THEM ON RFE?" THE PAO REPLIED THAT IN ABSENCE OF THE SCRIPTS IN QUESTION, HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE ALLEGED SLANDERS, BUT WOULD COMMUNICATE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE COMPLAINT TO THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DURING OUR FAREWELLS, CHABASINSKI SAID HE ALSO WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT THE MFA CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN VOA AND RFE BROADCASTS. HE THEN CLAIMED THAT HE HAD LISTENED TO THE EIGHT O'CLOCK EVENING BROADCAST OF POLISH VOA (1900 GMT) FOR 23 CONSECUTIVE DAYS WHILE HE TOOK A CURE AT A SANATORIUM NEAR WARSAW. ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE COULD NOT AGREE WITH ALL THE POLISH VOA SAID, THE PROGRAMMING WAS "FACTUAL AND NON-POLEMICAL" AND UNLIKE THE "SLANDERS BEING DELIVERED BY THE SCOUNDRELS AT RFE."

6. COMMENT: THE POLES CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE THE APPROACHING GIEREK VISIT TO ATTEMPT TO GET THE USG TO RESTRAIN RFE. WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THAT THIS BE DONE; THROUGHOUT THE VISIT RFE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS DESIGNATED ROLE IN AN APPROPRIATELY CREATIVE MANNER IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES. HOWEVER, AS WE STATED IN THE REFERENCED I-O LETTER, SPECIAL CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN DURING THE PRE-VISIT PERIOD TO AVOID CONTENT AND TONE WHICH WOULD SERVE AS A PRETEXT FOR MORE CHARGES OF THE KIND MADE BY CHABASINSKI. WE ATTACHED TO THAT LETTER A COPY OF A JULY 15 BROADCAST ABOUT GIEREK WHICH WE BELIEVED WAS AN EXAMPLE OF BAD TONE AND QUESTIONABLE CONTENT. IT RIDICULED GIEREK'S JULY 22 BROADCAST ON MOSCOW TV AND BY IMPLICATION ASSOCIATED HIM WITH THE STALINIST ERA, DURING WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE BROADCAST, "THOUSANDS OF POLES WERE TORTURED AND MURDERED IN BEXPIEKA DUNGEONS." THIS MAY VERY WELL BE ONE OF THE BROADCASTS CHABASINSKI HAD IN MIND. END COMMENT.

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7. ACTION REQUESTED. WE REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT UNDERTAKE AN URGENT REVIEW OF RFE BROADCASTING TO POLAND FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE HAVE BEEN ANY OTHER PERSONAL ATTACKS ON GIEREK AND THE POLISH LEADERSHIP AS SHARP AS THE JULY 15 EXAMPLE WE PROVIDED. ALTHOUGH WE RECEIVE SELECTED RFE SCRIPTS FOR REVIEW, THEY REACH US WITH CONSIDERABLE DELAY AND COVER ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THE BROADCAST TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LATEST BATCH WE RECEIVED COVERED THE AUGUST 1-15 PERIOD AND CONTAINED 8 ITEMS. ONE OF THEM, CENSORED NEWS NO. 79 OF AUGUST 11, CONTAINED A BRIEF ITEM ON GIEREK'S VACATIONING IN THE CRIMEA WHICH WE THOUGHT WAS IN SOMEWHAT QUESTIONABLE TASTE.

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